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THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION MAGAZINE.

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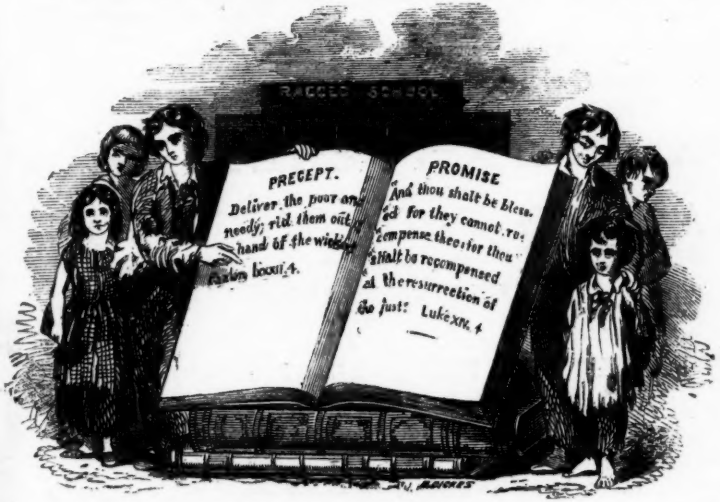
RAGGED SCHOOL
PRECEPT.
Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
Psalm lxxxii. 4.
PROMISE
And thou shalt be blessed for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Luke xiv. 4

"The word of the Lord endureth for ever."—1 Peter i. 25.

PROFITS DEVOTED TO RAGGED SCHOOLS.

LONDON:
KENT & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.
JOHNSTONE AND HUNTER, EDINBURGH; ROBERTSON, DUBLIN; AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

* * All Communications to be addressed to the Editor, 1, Exeter Hall, London.
* Orders for Advertisements to be sent to Robert K. Burt. Printer, Holborn Hill.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—The Committee beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of parcels of clothing, &c., from C. K., Chelsea; Mrs. Morgan, Miss Bodkin, for Lamb and Flag; Mrs. Lambert, Ladies' Working Society at Twickenham, for the Gun Street Schools; Hon. Mrs. Grantham, Mrs. Reade, and Mrs. Riddell.

Donations of old clothes, and books for forming school libraries, will be thankfully received by the Secretary, Mr. JOSEPH G. GENT, 1, Exeter Hall, Strand, W.C.

SCHOLARS' PRIZE MEETING.

The Meeting for Distributing the Prizes awarded by the Committee of the RAGGED SCHOOL UNION to Scholars for having remained in one place for at least Twelve Months, with good character, will be held in

EXETER HALL, STRAND,

On TUESDAY, MARCH 18th, 1862.

The Right Hon. the EARL OF SHAFTESBURY will preside.

The Scholars will begin to assemble at Six o'clock, and the Chair will be taken at Seven o'clock.

Tickets are issued from 1, Exeter Hall, Strand.

THE EIGHTEENTH

ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

WILL BE HELD IN

EXETER HALL,

ON MONDAY EVENING, MAY 12TH, 1862.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

Will take the Chair at Six o'clock precisely.

SPECIAL NOTICE

TO OFFICERS AND TEACHERS OF RAGGED SCHOOLS.

Special Meetings for Thanksgiving and Prayer.—The Committee of the Ragged School Union earnestly desire that on Sunday, May 4th, 1862, Special Meetings be convened in connection with the Schools, for Thanksgiving and Prayer, that God's blessing may rest upon the Ragged School Union Meeting, and give success to the Ragged School effort throughout the coming year.

DELEGATES' MEETINGS.

The Committee of the Ragged School Union consider it advisable for the Delegates from the various Schools to meet for the purpose of considering the subject of more generally conducting Bible Classes for the Elder Scholars in Ragged Schools, and for this purpose the Meeting will be held in the

FIELD LANE SCHOOL-ROOM, VICTORIA STREET, HOLBORN,

On WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16TH, 1862.

Tea will be provided at Six o'clock, and the chair taken at Seven o'clock.

NEW RAGGED SCHOOL IN BUCK'S ROW, WHITECHAPEL.

ADDITIONAL accommodation for educating the children of the very poor in Whitechapel is urgently required, both from their condition and their great numbers. It was ascertained by actual visitation from house to house in September, 1861, that over 1,800 children were then living in the immediate vicinity of Buck's-Row, and in the parish of Whitechapel, of whom by far the greater part belonged to the very poor, and had not hitherto been sent to any school whatever. The only ragged school near the place has been carried on for some years in a small room: it is highly appreciated by them, but is quite inadequate to meet the wants of the neighbourhood. The proposed plan has been warmly supported by the people of Whitechapel. A large and valuable piece of ground has been granted on lease for ninety-nine years at a peppercorn rent, virtually *given*, as a site for the building. It is most eligibly situated for the object. Contributions have been raised—in the parish and through the exertions of the parishioners—amounting to more than 900*l*. The Committee now appeal to the friends of education in London and throughout the country for their co-operation and assistance in completing the work.

The contract has already been signed and the building will be proceeded with at once. It will comprise a school for boys, 39 feet by 34, another for girls, 43 feet by 18, and a third for infants, 43 feet by 18. There will also be a residence for the master or mistress.

In addition to the day schools, the rooms will be appropriated for evening schools, adult classes, Sunday schools, lectures to working men, mothers' meetings, and other useful purposes: there will also be divine service on Sundays during some part of the day at least. Most extensive benefit will thus, it is hoped, be conferred upon the neighbourhood. Not less than 1,500*l*. will be required to complete the plan: but the Committee solemnly believe that the money will be expended upon an object well worthy such an outlay.

Let it be remembered that though the homes of these families are in Whitechapel, their labour is given to all parts of London; by the waterside; in the docks; in the streets; at large public buildings; and wherever heavy work is to be done. The whole mercantile community and the public at large are therefore deeply interested in the moral and social well-being even of the very poorest of these their brethren.

Contributions will be thankfully received by Rev. Canon Champneys, M.A., 31, Gordon-square, late Rector of Whitechapel, President of the Committee; Rev. James Cohen, M.A., Rector of Whitechapel, Chairman; Mr. John Davis, 113, Leman-street, Whitechapel, and Mr. Charles Fillingham, Road-side, Whitechapel, Treasurers; Rev. T. Scott, M.A., Chaplain, London Hospital, and Mr. J. M. French, High-street, Whitechapel, Hon. Secretaries; also by London and Westminster Bank, Whitechapel, on account of "Buck's-row Building Fund."

London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution.

Office, 200, Euston Road, near Euston Square, N.W.

PRESIDENT—REV. THOMAS DALE, CANON RESIDENTIARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

HOMES SUPPORTED BY THE INSTITUTION.

CENTRAL: 200, Euston Road, N.W
NORTH: Cornwall Place, Holloway Rd., N.
WEST: Parson's Green, Fulham, S.W.
SOUTH: St. James Place, Old Kent Rd., S.E.

Anonymous contributors to this Institution are respectfully informed that

THE FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

of this Institution will be issued about the 14th of March, and the Committee are most anxious that every supporter should have a copy, which will be forwarded to any address on a request being made to the Secretary, giving the initials and address.

CONTENTS:

Report—Full list of the Officers of the Institution.
Brief Outline of the Institution's progress from its formation.
Cases admitted and disposed from September, 1857.
The Homes and the Work of each.
Rules—The Objects and Constitution.
Suggestions for the guidance of the Matrons.
General Rules.
Prevention is better than cure.
Missionary Agencies to the friendless and fallen.
Occasional Social Meetings of former inmates.
Balance Sheet and Subscription List.

£2,500 will be required by the Committee to sustain present operations during 1862, upon the most economical arrangements. £10 is the average cost of each case; therefore a donation of that amount will open a way to an unfortunate through this medium.

Subscriptions and donations in aid of this Institution will be thankfully received by

Messrs. BOSANQUET & Co., Bankers, 73, Lombard Street, E.C.
Mr. F. NICHOLLS, 14, Old Jewry Chambers, E.C.
Mr. E. W. THOMAS, Secretary, 200, Euston Road, Euston Square, N.W.

Remittances always acknowledged by return of post.

200 poor Young Women were admitted to the Homes during 1861.

J. E. EAREE,

BREAKFAST AND TEA CONTRACTOR,

50, HACKNEY ROAD, NEAR SHOREDITCH CHURCH.

J. E. E. respectfully begs to inform the Clergy, Superintendents of Schools, and others who are in the practice of commemorating their Anniversaries, etc., by Public Breakfasts and Tea Meetings, that he has every requisite for such occasions, comprising Tables, Coppers, and China to any extent, in a superior style, at extremely moderate charges.

J. E. E. tenders his sincere thanks to those ladies and gentlemen who have hitherto favoured him with their kind patronage, and hopes by strict attention to ensure a continuance of the same; he also begs most respectfully to solicit the favour of their recommendation.

Rout Seats on Reasonable Terms. Vans, and every requisite for Excursion Parties, with the entire Management, taken by Contract.

COMMUNICATIONS BY POST IMMEDIATELY ATTENDED TO.

References are kindly permitted to be made to the Secretaries of the Ragged School Union and the Temperance League.

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Papers, Original and Selected.

OUR WORKFIELD:

A PLEA FOR SPECIAL AID TO THE RAGGED SCHOOL UNION.

We often wonder whether our readers fully estimate the area and the population embraced by the Ragged School Union. The fact that it takes oversight of all Ragged Schools within five miles of St. Paul's Cathedral almost tells its own tale. How vast our workfield! how strange its moral characteristics! and how incalculable its destinies, for weal or for woe, in the eternal world! Thus by the recent census it appears that the population of London is 2,803,034; which is an increase of no less the 440,798 on the numbers reported in 1851. Myriads of these are steeped in vice and woe; hundreds, through the loss of property or friends, have been reduced from affluence to beggary; and if thousands more quail under poverty and disease, it is simply because an avenging Nemesis has tracked their vices. Could, then, half be told of the tales of horror which come under our daily notice, those who did not doubt the fearful narrative would be compelled to adopt the language of Lord Byron, and say that "truth is strange; stranger than fiction." Yes; there are few homes in London without grim skeletons in them.

The City of London covers a space of only 434 acres; but the district which is now included under the name of London occupies a space of 78,029 acres, or 201 square miles. It includes two cities, six boroughs, and a number of places which were not long ago suburban villages. 200 miles of new streets have been added to London in ten years, and about eight miles of streets are added every year. Supposing that any one set himself the task of exploring the streets, and courts, and alleys of the Metropolis, going over the ground at the rate of eight miles a day, he would be occupied daily for one entire year before he completed his explorations of this modern Babylon.

The very constituents of this vast population — this nation

in a single city—shows how much the migratory tendencies of the poorer classes tend to increase its numbers. Hence, we have to contend not only with those vices which are of London growth, but also with the vices of provincial towns and foreign lands. Thus it appears, on the testimony of reliable authorities, that more than half the adults of London were born in the provinces. It contains more Scotch descendants than there are in Edinburgh; more Irish than in Dublin; 100,000 more Romanists than in Rome; and more Jews than in Jerusalem. There are, also, as regular residents in London, no less than 60,000 Germans, 30,000 French, and 6,000 Italians. It includes a very large number of Asiatics from all parts of the East, and many who still worship idols. Amongst its floating population, the West Indies and North and South America are largely represented. According to the Registrar General's report, more than one person dies every week from starvation, and about every eighth adult person dies in the London Hospitals.

One of the most painful aspects of this question is the way in which the extremes of poverty and wealth are allied in districts, where the cursory visitor can trace naught but the external signs of affluence. Thus, for example, near the heart of Belgravia—where the glare of luxury cannot veil the poverty behind—there are two large Ragged Schools. But why are they needed? Simply, because behind the magnificent mansions, which attract the attention of every visitor to London, are places, known as "back slums," in which are congregated a greater number of human beings than in the rest of London. The pen of Charles Dickens cannot adequately depict the wretchedness which is to be found in these obscure recesses of the Metropolis. In these places are located the common lodging-houses; 4,000 of which have been much improved during recent years, but hundreds of which the police cannot yet register as suitable abodes for the working-classes. Many of them are still overcrowded; and in some cases, three or four different families occupy a single room. If the population of England were fairly distributed over the country, there would be 375 persons to every square mile; but if the population of London were similarly distributed, there would be 1,920 persons to each square mile. In one district only, there are no less than 100,000 persons located within the boundaries of a single square mile; 90,000 of whom attend no place of worship. The inhabitants of this district are professional thieves,

beggars, and low Irish Roman Catholics—chiefly costermongers or fruit-hawkers.

"Slums" like these become the very laboratories of fever and cholera, from which the rich suffer as well as the poor; so that Dives cannot, if he would, say of ulcer-bitten Lazarus, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Disown our common brotherhood we may; but sooner or later the penalty of our neglect must be paid, either in rampant disease, or in gore-faced revolution.

Nor is the religious aspect of this great city as we could wish it to be; nay, to those who *really* believe that men have souls it is most disheartening. It is true that the religious wants of the population are somewhat cared for so far as the mere erection of churches and chapels is concerned; but in too many places devoted men preach to empty pews; and in others, crowds are collected only to hear "a Gospel, which is not another," simply because it is no gospel at all! For, example, it appears that there are within the Bills of Mortality, no less than 1,097 places of worship, with an average of 630 seats in each place; thus supplying seat-room for 681,110 persons. But the attendance on the morning of March 31st, 1851, was only 482,000, and 328,000 in the evening.

But there is a black side even to this dark picture; for there are nearly 100 places of worship where doctrines are taught directly opposed to the Word of God; there are many churches where semi-Popery is practised and preached; and many chapels where anything is taught but the pure Gospel—a mixture of Germanism and pseudo-philosophy being substituted.

Happily, some efforts are being made to meet the spiritual claims of our poorer brethren. About 800 City Missionaries, Scripture Readers, and Bible Women are engaged in house-to-house visitation. Nearly 2,000 voluntary agents of the Christian Instruction Society and Open-Air Mission devote the Lord's Day to the evangelisation of the masses. At Theatre services and Ragged Churches thousands congregate, whose ragged attire but indicates their spiritual poverty—the external being a true emblem of the internal; whilst a noble band of 2,972 Ragged School teachers labour amid the haunts of depravity and woe with signal success. We may well say with signal success; whether we regard the population already gathered into Ragged Schools, or the results vouchsafed by God to their patient and self-denying labours. For example: Our Schools alone embrace 34,230 scholars with 27,070 in daily attendance; in our 88 Parents'

Meetings, 2,307 fathers and mothers are taught how to make their homes happy; and in our 86 Ragged Churches, 4,340 adults are statedly pointed to that blood which is the sole key to the Celestial City. When we regard such numbers as these—giving as they do an aggregate population, old and young, of 40,000 souls—we may well exclaim, in mingled wonder and praise, "What hath God—*not man*—wrought!" To Him then be all the praise, that hitherto "the common people have heard us gladly."

Nor are the fruits already vouchsafed less encouraging, whether they are regarded from the temporal or from the spiritual standpoint. Think, for example of the 1,218 boys and girls who last year obtained the prizes awarded by the Ragged School Union for good conduct in service; of the 700 former scholars who, as emigrants, are *known* to be the most industrious among the many toilers for bread in far-off lands; and of the 400 Shoe-blacks who, during the last ten years, have, like modern alchymists, been engaged in transmuting the mud of London into pure gold. So when we turn to these higher results, which lay hold of eternity, how much is there to encourage us to exercise greater faith in our heavenly Father? Such a glance, indeed, seems to show that, as Ragged School workers, we walk by sight rather than by faith. For—with 122 former scholars, who are now *known* to be communicants; with the 144 former pupils, who are now labouring as teachers in these Ragged Schools where they first learnt that they had souls to be saved or lost; and with the 100 adults belonging to our Parents' Meetings, who have made a public profession of discipleship at the Supper of the Lord—we have rich fruits, telling us that the Spirit of God has, indeed, "brooded upon the face of the waters," and, by his potent will, rolled back the tide of sin and misery.

We think, then, that considering what the Ragged School Union has done, and, by God's help, intends to do, that there is no occasion further to point out its claims upon the liberality of the Christian Church, now that its coffers are well-nigh empty, and a special appeal is rendered necessary, unless it abandons the great mission it has undertaken. If such additional pecuniary aid be tendered at once, there is no fear that this great missionary work will collapse; but rather, extending its branches far and wide, it will prove its healthiness by its vigorous offshoots. We trace the power of the Holy Spirit both in the origin of the machinery and in the selection of the agents employed; so that we

fear not that God will permit our labours to be restricted or abandoned, solely because they are—strangest of strange reasons —*successful!* Still, the potency of His Holy Spirit is no excuse for the idleness or the covetousness of the Church; but rather, seeing that the Divine blessing has so signally rested on our labours, it ought to be an additional incentive for Christians either to give or to work, according to their special gifts. Let us then obey the exhortation involved in the quaint lines of Horatio Bonar:—

"Sin worketh,—
Let us work too;
Sin undoeth,—
Let us do:
Busy as sin our work we ply,
Till we rest in the rest of eternity!"

ANOTHER OF LIFE'S BYE-WAYS, AND WHAT I THERE FOUND.

Often has it struck me that between the antiquary and the Christian a striking resemblance subsists. The objects of their tastes are different, and often lie wide apart. The points of resemblance between them are few, but their favourite haunts are alike—ruins, grim ruins. The one hovers like a spirit of the place, all eye, all ear, amid fallen towers, roofless churches, ivied castles, and moss-grown tomb-stones. The other lingers, all heart, amid ruined souls, in prisons, hospitals, and starving homes. Time opened up the path of the one; sin ploughed up the path of the other. Each toils to trace in the wrecks before them, the plans, the skill, the workmanship, the genius of the old masters. Those dear to the heart of the antiquary are the workers in brass, iron, and stone, in the morning of civilisation. They that are dear to the affections of the Christian are the Holy Spirit and his host of agents that have wrought and now work under his direction since the day that Adam stood weeping, broken-hearted, at the gate of Eden. To pursue the parallel a little farther, each purposes chiefly the investigation of some one particular class of objects,—the works of some one particular master, the products of his pen, pencil, or chisel. To collect and preserve these, or simply to behold them, each cheerfully undergoes all the toils and troubles, perils and privations of his peculiar field of labour.

Jesus is called the "first-born among many brethren." In order to be one of them, bearing his image becomes indispensable. To bring the human soul to resemble Christ is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit. His studio is the world. One of the grand exercises of the Christian—one of the delights of his heart, is to trace the work of his pen, pencil, and chisel, as found among the relics of the fall, as they lie scattered over the history of the countless dead and that of living millions. So vast is the range, so various the specimens, and in-

numerable the instances of his handy work, that to no region of the globe can the eye of the antiquary of the Cross be turned but it detects some vestiges of his skill. Yea, every man, be his language, colour, or clime what they may, must either be a sculpture on which he is at work, or block on which hammer and chisel have never been lifted. To detect this fact, among the families of the earth, to admire his workmanship where it exists, to deplore its absence, to toil and travel, spend and be spent, till every block that God hath made of our bone and blood be brought under his hand and stand erect in his place among men, bearing the image of God, is the great labour of every one to whom Christ is precious. In the light of this simple illustration, the following narrative may instruct and encourage the reader. A more clear instance of the work of the Spirit as the grand sculptor of the kingdom of Christ, has seldom fallen under the eye of any observer.

In the course of business it was necessary I should remove from the city to a village seven miles on the south-west side of it, on the banks of the Thames. A suitable home being procured and business resuming its usual channel, the disposal of my leisure hours on Sabbath became my next consideration. The exploration of the village as to the moral condition of its people was determined on. The month of July was in all its glory. This resolution being formed, the next Saturday found me attempting its prosecution. In the afternoon, just as it was wearing away among the amber-like tints of a summer evening, I stood cogitating at the gate of my own cottage as to the direction I would take. Looking towards the south a winding and sloping lane was visible, flanked on either side by a few fine houses separated from the path through it by high, well-trimmed privet hedges, and intersected about its middle by one of England's great railway lines. The seclusion of the walk, the brilling of bird music overhead and in the hedges, and the effect of the waning sunlight on its simple beauties, decided my choice. Ascending its easy slope, keeping southward, after a moment's pause to allow an express train to pass, I crossed the line, and in a few minutes I reached the highway. On turning my face northward I beheld the village reposing in a kind of valley, with the Thames creeping through it. As seen from my point of view the village in some measure resembled a fossil lizard, thick and bunchy towards the shoulders, the legs with out-spread toes at right angles to the body, and the tail curved as in the attitude of resistance. While I gazed for a moment, my eye was arrested by a mass of brick and wooden buildings; at the west end of it was a saw-mill, built of pitched deals; the east was closed by the main and secondary buildings of a large distillery, the front of the whole mass dipping into the Thames. "Well," said I, "yonder is a slice of this lizard-like village, easily manageable by a nice Sunday-school worked by half a dozen teachers. If not so occupied already, by the help of God I will. Who knows what work the grand Sculptor of the kingdom of grace may have done or may yet do in that place!" With these thoughts revolving in my mind I turned to the left, and entering a narrow lane bearing northward, I bore down on the spot described.

Having reached the saw-mill, and looking eastward, I had the river on the left, and for a quarter of a mile on the right a frontage of dilapidated houses two stories high, with courts, densely populated, stretching behind and approached by bottle-necked entrances, the court forming the body of it; and if the reader wish to complete the image, let him conceive a population of human beings of all

sorts and sizes clad in raiment various as the colours of the rainbow, reminding one of those bottle menageries collected by school-boys from the ponds on our commons, consisting of leeches and lizards, frogs and sticklebacks, eels and beetles—all alive in water and mud. The populations of one of these courts were not less various, their individual natures as unique and the element they live in not more pure. Between the river and the houses ran a platform or a pathway, elevated above the bed of the river eight or ten feet and protected by a facing of stone. When the tide receded, there lay between this facing and the river a bank of oozy mud, a hundred feet wide, rotting in the sun. Along the pathway was a crowd of human beings, children at all manner of games, men smoking at their doors, and dirty women, arms akimbo, killing time with gossip and tearing some neighbour's character with their tongues. High over all rose the drunkard's chorus and the rattle of the beer pot, for at each end stood a public-house, the benches outside filled with men.

How full of life the whole scene! Like one of those living clouds that swing above and along our streams on a summer night. But there was one difference: in the cloud of life before me every creature was a soul—a being worlds could not buy, death could not destroy, and God in his own person alone could redeem.

At a loss in what direction to go, or to what hand to turn, and carefully eyeing the noisy crowd before me, I observed a man leaning against a post smoking and alone. Walking softly towards him, I wished him good evening. He took no notice, but seemed lost in a kind of waking sleep. His face was directed across the river, the descending sun fell full upon it; his eyes, vacant and meaningless, seemed directed to nothing; his countenance appeared made of bronze, and deeply marked with the small-pox. Thick black crisp locks fell over his low forehead; his bust reminded me of a ship's figure-head that had ploughed the ocean for years. He was enveloped in a blue guernsey, dirty ducks, and laced boots. He was a fierce, foul, heartless man. Such was my first impression. At last he condescended to notice my salutation.

"Friend, have you lived long here?"

"Why, I have never lived anywhere else."

"Have you any Sunday-schools here?"

"Oh! that's your game, is it? Ask me about these things! As well ask the post there; chaps like me have no time for these matters, we have to work, Sir; the Bible, Sunday-schools, souls, and kingdom come, and these things we leave to parsons and mother Perry down the way. That old river there gives us our bread, and night and day we have to wait on him, Sir. He's our Bible, Church, and Sunday-school, everything."

"Well, but what for the world to come?" Here he turned a countenance upon me, every feature of which sneered—and settled enmity to God hung upon it like a shadow. Laying his hand coarsely upon my shoulder, he said, "I've told you all I know; hook it now to mother Perry's; she knows all these things as well as I know my 'bacca box."

"Who is mother Perry, friend."

"Why" (something like softness stole over his face for a moment), "she's a poor old soul, as bowed as a cask-hoop, who has bothered us chaps for twenty years about our souls, and hell, and heaven, and such like, and she may be seen coaxing our little (here he used a synonyme for children found neither in the

Bible nor Bailey) like a hen her chickens when the hawk is near. She takes them to her house, and reads the Bible to them, you know."

This was just what I wanted. I had unexpectedly fallen upon one of those fine old works of the Spirit—an aged Christian. The quaint description of her in no degree lessened my desire to see her, so turning to my friend, I said:—

"Does she live far off?"

"About a stone's throw from where we stand, just in that court there where that young 'un is standing."

"Well, I'll go and see her, and now sir, remember I said there's another river besides the Thames you must find a job upon, if you would ever make a profitable living, become truly happy, and see heaven,—the river of the City of God—New Jerusalem."

Having parted with my friend at the post, I bent my steps towards the little girl pointed out to me. I asked her to show me Mrs. Perry's.

"O, that's the old lady that reads the Bible to us of a Sunday."

"Yes," I replied.

She turned up the narrow entrance of the court, and pointing to a door with a clean step before it, said, "That's it, Sir," and disappeared.

Before knocking, I surveyed the court; it was flanked on each side by very old houses, whose windows were broken and stuffed with odds and ends of old wearing apparel, dust bins and stagnant pools made up the other decorations of the place. Some children at play, one or two women at work, were the only tokens of life.

After lifting the knocker, a clean old woman, bowed with years, opened the door, and asked me to step in. The quietness, order, and cleanliness of the house, so different from everything without, was quite refreshing—like a clear fountain of cold water to a weary traveller in a desert at noon. She pointed me to a seat, and quietly settled herself in the old arm-chair. We now faced each other; on the window sill between us was a stocking she had been mending, and the dear old Bible well thumbed in every direction lay open, and her spectacles upon it. I felt I was indeed in the middle of a "Cotter's Saturday Night." She was on the borders of eighty. When young she had been tall and handsome; in features strong and decided, indicating much decision of character. Her manner was quiet and rather dry. Her whole exterior betokened long departed physical strength, and her countenance much remaining mental vigour. There was a restlessness in the eye when she was struck with any remark, giving it a sparkling appearance, by the light of which you could almost see into her mind and heart, and the depth to which your words had penetrated, and her terse remarks which followed this phenomenon, made one feel as if looking into a kaleidoscope of quaint devices and endless variety. In a word, I had fallen in with quite a character. In some respects she was a remarkable woman. About her whole demeanour, there was massiveness, with dignity. Her piety festooned it with simple graces, reminding you of an old solid garden wall, hung with pendent flowers. Strong, very; yet warm and grand. A cord ran diagonally through the room, on which were hung some bags, making a partition after the style of the tabernacle. On one side of it was a bed, on the other three or four forms.

"Well, mother, can you guess what has brought me to see you?"

"I have not the most distant idea, Sir."

"I feel anxious to know the condition of this neighbourhood as to Sunday-schools. How many have you in the district?"

"We have none, Sir, except you call my handful of children that occupy every Sunday that corner where you are sitting, a school."

This remark at once explained the diagonal partition of the room, and the use of the cord and the sacks.

"You astonish me!" I replied. "None! no attempts to educate these neglected children?"

"Attempts did you say, Sir?—of these there have been many, and yet one school hath not arisen out of all the bustle. These were like wintry blasts, sharp and short. Like them, too, they died away in the darkness, and became quiet as before." Here the twinkle of the old saint's eyes added pungency to her remark.

"How long have you been in this neighbourhood?"

"In this house I have been thirty years."

"Has your Sunday-school existed long?"

"It's nearly as old as my stay here."

"Indeed, mother: what induced you to commence it?"

"Why, Sir, it's with the lives of many of God's children as it is with that of nations: some of their greatest events spring from trifles. I have spent near all my days in and about this neighbourhood; my husband you know has been the greater part of his life connected with the water, so we have been nearly all our time on the banks of the river.

"Well, one cold winter day, a little girl came to my door, seeking bread, which I gave her, asking her, at the same time, to come in and warm herself. In those days beggars had neither so much brass, nor of the devil, as they have in them now—we could trust them in doors then. In the course of conversation I learned there were three or four more little ones at home, and that her mother was ill a-bed. I dismissed her, promising to call at her mother's to-morrow. I called, according to promise. It was one of the houses there fronting the water. I found the girl's tale true as far as it went. But, Sir, it did not go far enough, for I discovered that her mother was a hard-working proper woman, with four children and a bad husband; striving to do his part and her own—to get bread for their mouths and clothes for their backs—she was worn out and laid on a sick bed. Sad sight; his wickedness and her weakness were making beggars of the children. On leaving her I promised to call the next day. I was much cast down; the state of their souls before God, their temporal sufferings as a family, and the hint the whole scene gave me of a change for the worse in the character of the people of the district, weighed me down with sorrow. Ah, Sir, that visit was putting the bodkin to the bone, and told me a sore was there—that the whole ham was in danger. Being young married, my own family—two daughters—were grown up and in place. My husband, from the nature of his employment, was often from home, so I frequently had spare time. When I returned from my visit I sat musing over the fire. A desire to honour my dear Master in the affairs of that afflicted family filled my whole heart. But what to do I knew not. My influence with the rich was nothing. My station was very humble—a waterman's wife. My means were slender. While so engaged, that saying of God's, 'The gold and the silver are mine,' came with great force into my mind. I started to my feet, saying, 'Well, if I am poor, and all my kindred poor, my God

is rich—yea, the riches of Jesus are unsearchable.' I threw myself before him in an agony of prayer. There I laid out the whole case before him. Like Hezekiah, I spread the whole letter before his face. Now I waited his blessed will. I felt soothed somehow, and went quietly on with my household duties. As the evening wore on I sat down to read my evening portion from the Word, and, according to custom, I was comparing passage with passage—that, you know, Sir, is my only commentary; I have used no other for twenty years. Well, while so employed, my eye fell on our Lord's command to Peter, 'Feed my lambs.' That was a message to me—a burst of sunshine through a rent in the clouds. I resolved on the spot to bring that poor family to my house in the afternoons, and teach them to read and write, and sew, at least."

Here a gleam of that long past day lit up all her face, revealing a big heart full of grace, truth, and tenderness, affecting my mind like one of those soft scenes in a fine transparency.

"From that day they came to me as pupils. They remained till they were able to work and able to read, write, and sew. My success in this family constrained me to visit others, and deal with them on the same plan; and, Sir, I have had twenty, aye, thirty little ones week days and Sundays in this very room."

"What fees did you take?"

"Well, Sir, my fees were two-fold. First, the consciousness of relieving for an hour or two daily of their noise, poor weakly parents; and second, the possibility of turning their young hearts to Jesus, and so, as far as in me lay, giving them a chance of succeeding in the two worlds, you know—that which now is, and that which is to come. The amount of these fees collected in this little place for thirty years I know not: the great day will make it all clear."

"You must often think about them all, and often ask the question, 'Where are they?'"

"I sometimes have tidings of a few of them now and then. They turn up everywhere; they are scattered over the living world. My scholars are divided between heaven and earth. Some have gone to glory on the wings of the blessed Gospel. Ah, Sir, you spoke of fees. I am well paid. Every one at the Great Teacher's feet is a perfect treasure to my poor heart. Often when I look up among the clouds of an evening, as the sun is going down, I imagine I see their curly locks and dimpled faces looking down on me, and I seem to hear them say, 'Come up, mother—do come, there's no sickness, hunger, nor frost here. Jesus, blessed Jesus, is all in all in this home, and we are happy without end.' My poor heart responds, 'A few more sunsets, and I'll lay down my stick, and these old bones will be laid to rest, and I will come up to my Lord and join my band of darlings in their hymns and their happiness.' These, Sir, are but my frail heart's dreamings; they are like oil to my weary joints, and when I step out on my visits I clutch my stick all the firmer for them, and I know they make my otherwise crisp words fall soft as snow-flakes among the sorrows of my suffering neighbours. Now, Sir, you have got the history of my coming to live here, and how it was I tried to teach."

(To be continued.)

THE LITTLE RAG-SORTER.

It was the first Lord's day in the year, when a Sabbath-school teacher paced her chamber irresolute and perplexed, as she marked the hour advancing for her usual attendance at the school. She held a note in her hand, and as she glanced at it from time to time, she inquired doubtfully, 'Which way?—which way is the best?'

The note contained the request that she would visit a sick friend lately arrived from the country, who expressed a desire to see her at the hour that was now approaching, while a call in another direction, on which it is now unnecessary to enter, *seemed* to have an equal claim upon her time and heart. Either of these services, leading as they did in widely different directions, involved the necessity of foregoing her class, which she had never yet failed to meet, excepting when laid aside by sickness. She had been interested in the spiritual state of the invalid, but hitherto opportunity had been lacking of pressing on her friend the uncertain issue of her illness, and the eternal interests of her soul. Reason argued, an opening so favourable to her purpose might never again occur, and the circumstance of the expressed desire to see her seemed to point her a leading to be followed. The other call appeared to be of little less importance, and for a few minutes even preponderated in the balance. All the ways before her might be good in themselves, yet none were really so, without the presence of the Lord went with her, unless His voice said, "*This* is the way, walk ye in it."

"Which way?" she repeated, as the necessity of a speedy choice pressed on her heart, and the last chime before the hour arrested her steps. There is one way always open, the new and living Way; and there, like Hezekiah, she spread the letter, and cried unto the Lord God of Israel. The great High Priest, who never misunderstands the sighs and groans of his waiting people, listened to her complaint. She rose calm, though still undecided, but content that the Lord's will should be done in her and by her. But she now saw that the power of entering on this solemn subject, so near her heart, with her sick friend, might or might not be granted her; yet was it not well to make the attempt? But then the school! Who would supply her place? It was too late to attempt to procure a substitute; should she not disappoint her class for once?

Again she sought the throne of grace (whoever sought counsel there in vain?); and this time she was consciously enlightened by the Holy Spirit's teaching. She saw that one duty was not intended to displace another, and that the instruction of the children God had clearly placed in her hands could not, must not, be set aside for an uncertain service, without His sanction. How often, from want of seeking such counsel, the Lord's servants are made to feel they have become the servants of men, and discover in the end they have rushed into paths of service for which they are wholly unfitted, and that they were never intended to tread, by following what they thought a leading of Providence, when it was, more strictly speaking, a trial of faith (Jonah i. 3).

The consequences in the case I have stated were, as they ever will be in all decisions made in the light of heaven, with the single eye to God's will.

The path of duty became clear, leaving the soul satisfied with the results, whatever they might be; for had not the Lord said, "I will guide thee with mine eye"?

Assured and happy in the help given her in her hour of need, my friend took her way to the school, and entered on her duties with the strength and joy that seemed granted her, in proportion to the wrestle and perplexity of that silent chamber. But let her tell her own story.

I have been accustomed, during a pause in the duties of the afternoon of the Lord's day, to go out into the street and seek to win some stragglers to the Sabbath-school, and bring them under the teaching of the Word, if only for the hour which then remains to us. This day I was returning, after an unsuccessful search, when I was attracted by a child not far from the entrance of the school-house. Her arms were interlaced in the palisades which surrounded the inclosure, and her pale face pressed against the iron-work: a child, such as may be seen more frequently in the crowded haunts of our great cities than elsewhere, born amidst vice and disease, dwelling in some dark cellar or hidden den, from which the light of heaven is excluded, as if it bore pestilence rather than healing on its wings.

I have seen many children, and older persons too, in dirt and rags, but I never saw such abject wretchedness as was conveyed in that old-looking wrinkled face and listless form before me. She seemed, in attitude and expression, to have neither interest nor lot in the life around her. I thought she might be about nine years of age, but I afterwards learnt she was upwards of thirteen. I spoke to her, and asked her if she would come in with me, and hear the children sing. She shook back the long tangled locks of her sun-burnt hair, and looked vacantly in my face, as if scarcely comprehending my question: but on repeating my invitation, she followed me without a word.

The little stranger sat silently listening to the hymn of the children, the simple discourse, and the few words addressed individually to the scholars. The school over, she departed; but on the morning of the following Lord's day, I found her of her own accord seated in the place she had previously occupied.

I know not how it was, I seemed to be used this day as I never had been used before; I felt myself a child speaking to children. The Holy Ghost was very present with us; tears were on the cheeks of many of the little ones; I was myself so engrossed with my subject (the parable of the prodigal son), that it was only at the close of the address that I turned to glance at the new scholar. Her eyes were fixed eagerly on my face, as she breathlessly drank in the words which fell from my lips. I proceeded to make the application of the parable, and she drew closer and closer to my side; and gathering up the hem of my dress, fold upon fold, she held it firmly clenched in her long thin fingers, as if she feared to lose me before she had heard the fulness of Gospel grace extended to sinners.

Our parting hymn was sung; the children went away; but *this* child did not move. We were left alone. Then I spoke to her of Jesus, and made her repeat after me a simple prayer for the gift of God's Holy Spirit. She learned

it more rapidly than I could have thought possible, judging from her unintelligent countenance. As she was leaving, I said to her—

"Will you come and see us again next Lord's day, and hear of the Good Shepherd, of whom I will tell you?"

"I dare not," she replied. "Father will beat me if I do; he won't let me go to church."

"But this is a school, not a church," I suggested.

"It's like one, though; he won't let me come here; but I *will* come," she added quickly, in an impetuous and determined manner.

I tried to show her that obedience was the first step towards the knowledge of Jesus, and that she must previously seek her father's permission; and I offered to endeavour to obtain it for her, if she would tell me where she lived.

A gleam of satisfaction crossed her face, and she minutely described the way to the street, and the cellar in which I should find them. Accordingly, during the week following, I discovered their miserable lodging. The father of the poor girl was absent seeking for work; and the woman I found there, and whom I at first thought was her mother, reluctantly consented for the child to attend the school.

I had scarcely taken my place the next Lord's day, when the gaunt-looking little stranger again appeared. Her earnest attention and evident pleasure increased, as I went on to tell them of the lost sheep, and the love of our Good Shepherd to His little wandering one, whom, when He had found, He laid on His shoulders rejoicing.

Again and again my heart rose in praise and thanksgiving to Him who had heard the voice of my prayer, and by thus guiding me to choose the safe path of duty already allotted to me, had bestowed on me the unspeakable privilege of leading this little stray lamb to the Saviour's feet.

In the afternoon, my new scholar was again in the place she had chosen, silent and absorbed; but the next Lord's day I missed her. The week had nearly closed, when the woman with whom she lived called at my house, and told me the child was very ill; that she had taken a bad cold in the first place, from attending the school, adding roughly, "You had better go and look after her." I knew it was not likely to be true that her illness could be attributed to the cause she was so eager to blame; but I felt that, even if it were so, *it was well.*

Again I entered the miserable cellar which these poor people called "home:" so dark was it, that, on leaving the daylight of the narrow street, all objects within were indistinct.

The occupation of the family was that of rag-sorting. On a heap of the larger rags, which formed her bed (though the room itself had many other nightly occupants), lay my little stranger scholar, more wan and wasted than I could have imagined possible in the short time that had elapsed since we had parted. I approached her, and after waiting a few moments to see if she would recognise me, I spoke. She knew my voice, and motioned me to come closer to her, exclaiming in a shrill voice—

"Oh, come! come here; and tell me of *Him!*"

"Tell you what? of whom?" I inquired, wishing to discover if she had retained anything of the truth. She looked at me half reproachfully, puzzled

at the possibility of my forgetting what I had taught her; and in a subdued voice she replied—

"Why—you know. Tell me of *Him*—that *good* gentleman that you called 'Jesus!'"

Motionless she listened, with her eyes fixed on my face, while once more I opened to her the wondrous story of a Saviour's love to sinners, and how he came to seek and to save the lost. I pointed to the one sacrifice for sins for ever—to the blood of the Crucified as full satisfaction for the sinner's guilt. I told her Satan and our corrupt hearts would strive to induce us to accept anything rather than the offers of free grace and a Saviour's righteousness. The love of Jesus Christ to sinful men was the fountain of living water of which this poor wanderer desired to drink deeply; *she* longed to follow the good Shepherd—*she* to whom the Gospel of the kingdom had never before been preached, and who three weeks ago knew nothing of the treasures *laid up* for all who feel their lost and ruined state! Her vacant countenance brightened with intelligence, her very features seemed altered, while she listened with increasing satisfaction to the "good tidings of great joy." Many might have marvelled at her indifference to all outward things; but it was not strange to me. She sought life eternal, and drank in the Lord's loving invitation to *all*, as one who heard Jesus passing by.

The following day, when I visited her, I was painfully struck by the swift progress of her disease: the flushed cheek; the restless eye, which wandered ceaselessly around, as if in search of some person or thing she failed to find; the uneasy tossing from side to side; the rapid, meaningless question, — all convinced me that the delirium attendant on fever had set in, and filled me with anxiety, lest I had come too late to hear her speak to me again, and tell me of her hope.

I bent over her, and asked her if she knew me. She gave me no intelligible reply. In my distress, I fell on my knees, and prayed earnestly for one more opportunity of speaking to her of a Saviour; and He, who of old stood by the fever-bed, was beside this also, and that to calm and sustain; for while I was pleading with Him for help in my helplessness, the poor sufferer's restlessness abated. In less than an hour she recognised me, and her face turned towards me in expectation, as if still thirsting for the water of life.

I took my place by her bed, and went on to repeat to her in a low voice the parable of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 11), which, at our first meeting, had so deeply impressed her. The little hunger-pinched face became calm and composed, and the distressing excitement gave place to eager but profound attention. At that touching passage, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him," &c., she exclaimed, in a short, decided manner—a manner peculiar to these neglected little ones, reared in the very hotbed of sin and strife—

"Ah! that was *just* like *me!* That's good—say it again. *A great way off?* What, ever so far? Away—away—like me with the devil? That must be far from God and the Lamb!"

After a pause, to moisten her poor, black, parched lips, she continued, "Yes! *I was a great way off.* But the father saw him before he saw the

father—*that's* like me again! Why did he not clean himself a little before he went home? I would. Oh, I forgot!" she added quickly, and in a tone of deep sadness; "you said we could not *make* ourselves clean. I wish we could! I should like to *show* Jesus that I want to be good."

I tried to make her understand that her heavenly Father had put away the filthiness of sin from her for *His sake* who had died for her.

"Oh! how good! how kind! But"—she hesitated, and covered her face with her long, thin fingers, as her tears flowed fast, and sob after sob almost choked her utterance—"I am afraid *I* have been *worse* than that bad son. I have told lies; and you said no liar could enter the beautiful home. I have used bad words—awful bad words—worse than you know of; and God said no one should take His name in vain. I have had a book, too, full of wicked songs, and I have sung them,—and—don't turn away your head—I have—stolen too. I thought of all this when I came home, and for a long time I felt frightened to go to God; but all at once I remembered about the thief—that poor thief who died with Jesus, you know. And as soon as everybody was fast asleep in our room, I got up; very softly I went over into the corner there by the fire; I took my song-book and tore it into little pieces, red cover and all, though I once thought it so pretty. I struck a match; I burnt it, every morsel, to tinder. Then I said, 'Dear Jesus! I want very much to love you. I want to get away from the devil—*please* help me! Take away my naughty thoughts—*please do, dear Jesus!*' I think *He* heard me—I know *He did*," she added with animation, "for I felt somehow different ever since. I am not afraid now—*no, not one bit!* and I love Him—oh, so much!"

During the night, it was necessary to keep her very quiet; afterwards I read and prayed, and talked with her as simply as I could; asking her once or twice if she quite understood me, to which she quickly replied,—

"Yes, yes! don't stop; we haven't long."

She remained perfectly calm and peaceful, and about eight o'clock fell into a slumber. After an absence of some hours, for the discharge of other duties, I returned, and found sleep had given place to a sort of stupor.

I spoke to her of her Saviour's sufferings—of his thirst; adding, "And all this he bore for *you*."

The upturned eyes, and glance of intense gratitude, I cannot describe; but I shall never forget as she whispered, "*Thank* you, *dear Jesus!*"

I watched her for a few minutes in silence; but she looked at me wistfully, as if she had something more to say, but could not express it; nor could I understand what she wanted for some little time, when I said,—

"Do you wish me to thank God for you?"

"Yes, yes! Oh, that's it!" she replied.

During the next two hours, which were spent in reading or repeating to her portions of the Word, or in prayer; she was frequently slightly delirious, but even then, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth spoke, and the often-repeated words, "Father, I have sinned!—make me one of

thy servants—saw him a *great way off*;—ran—not the son, the *father* ran. O God grant me Thy Holy Spirit! Take away my naughty heart—*please* give me a new one! Wash me, make me clean in the blood of Jesus!" proved that the parable which first attracted her attention, and the prayer—the first she was ever taught to utter—were constantly in her mind.

Night came, and it was evident that the poor tenement would not much longer be required, and that this fair, new-born, blood-cleansed soul was about to join the countless host of the redeemed.

Death-damps stood upon her face, which yet beamed brighter in the valley of shadows than it it had ever shown in the valley of tears; her feet were cold, and her hands also, though they continued folded in prayer.

For a time all was still, even the laboured beathing ceased, when, with sudden energy, and far greater power than I could have supposed it possible for her to have retained, she raised herself up, and with her earnest eyes fixed on my own, she said in a clear, distinct voice,—

"Fetch them in! Oh, *be sure* and fetch them in, and tell them of Jesus! Tell them of—Jesus!"

Again there was a silence—she scarcely breathed—a slight spasm crossed her face—all was nearly over. I said,—

"Dear child! Jesus has gained the VICTORY FOR YOU!"

She caught the word, and with a shout of gladness, such as never rang from those pallid lips before, in the fourteen years of her sorrowful life, she cried,—

"Victory! victory! I am washed—and made clean!—Glory!—"

Christian Treasury.

THE SOCIETY'S SCHOOL AGENT IN THE WEST AND SOUTH OF LONDON.

WITH a view to plant Ragged Schools where most needed, and to sustain all in a state of efficiency, the Committee of the Ragged School Union have for some years wholly employed two gentlemen, whose entire time is occupied among the Schools in the metropolis. The Schools on the south of the Thames and in the west of London have been under the visiting care of Mr. Hytche, who, in January last, presented the Committee with his Eighth Annual Report of his efforts during the year 1861, and the results following them. From that Report we make the following extracts:—

Eighth Annual Report on Western and Southern Ragged Schools, 1861.

In the West and South there are eighty-eight institutions. They may be thus classified, namely:—Schools, 80; Schools with Refuges, 3; Refuges, 5; Total, 88.

They include 79 Sunday Schools, 57 Day Schools, and 66 Night Schools.

Of these 88 institutions 63 receive annual, and 7 capitation grants.

NEW INSTITUTIONS.

During the past year seven institutions have been established.

One benefit of my visitation has sprung from the principle adopted from the first, namely, as a rule, not to give any prior notice of intended visits. By this plan the school is seen as it really is, and not drilled for the occasion. So that, if any defects exist, they are readily discerned, and the requisite advice tendered.

Nor has the visitation of the district or the schools been without visible results; for the past year has been no exception to the rule, that increased operations can be reported year by year. It is also satisfactory to know that, with increased machinery, the attendances and discipline have not retrograded.

During the past year there were 39 extensions. Of these, 18, or a moiety, were in old institutions. The list of extensions is as follows, namely:—8 Sunday Schools, 5 Day Schools, 9 Night Schools, 7 Penny Banks, and 10 Parents' Meetings. They are all progressing satisfactorily.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Seventy-nine Sunday Schools are conducted in Western and Southern districts; of these, 28 meet in the morning, 46 in the afternoon, and 50 in the evening.

The aggregate attendance may be thus estimated:—1,813, morning; 4,717, afternoon; and 6,462, evening.

There is still a paucity of voluntary teachers; for, though by the statistics supplied in March last, there was an apparent increase of 130, or from 1,273 to 1,403, yet the average attendance had fallen from 792 in 1860 to 781 in 1861. It is thus seen that a moiety of the teachers are absent every Sunday. Hence many classes are overcrowded. The system of relays is too generally adopted, and scholars are often taught by visitors, who know neither their habits nor their special wants. The most painful aspect of this subject is this—that the staff would not be insufficient did the teachers attend more regularly; for with 1,403 teachers to 10,122 Sunday Scholars, there is only about 8½ scholars to each teacher. I am sorry thus to refer to an evil which I am powerless to remedy, but seeing that hundreds are excluded from our Sunday Schools, not through want of space, but from want of teachers, it ought not to be blinked.

I still consider that the real ragged work is done on Sunday evenings.

Hence, I am glad to report that (exclusive of Refuges), 50 Sunday Schools meet in the evening, whilst 46 meet in the afternoon, The Sunday night attendance, too, exceeds that of the afternoon by 1,745, or by one-third. It is thus seen that if our scholars have increased, it has not been at the expense of the genuine ragged class.

DAY SCHOOLS.

There are 57 Day Schools in the West and South.

As some Institutions conduct more than one kind of Day School, they may

be thus classified:—Mixed, 46; Boys', 12; Girls', 13; or 71 distinct Day Schools.

The aggregate attendance is about 8,000.

The local Committees adopt every means of restricting the scholars to the proper class, that is, those whose parents are too poor, or too depraved, to pay a school fee. Still some scholars do creep into Day Schools who ought not to be there. In some cases there has been gross deception on the part of the parents. In other instances, children have been admitted when their fathers were out of work, who were not removed, as they ought to have been, when employment was obtained.

As I consider that the admission of the wrong class to be a fraud upon the Ragged School Union and the public, I have ever paid strict attention to this point. For example, it appears by my journals, that during 1860, in addition to Noel-street, where 171 scholars were examined, I investigated 78 cases in 24 Day Schools. Such examination led to the dismissal of 21 scholars. The fathers of the remaining 57 were either ill or out of work.

Want of school material, the irregular attendance of older scholars, and the short time the bulk of the scholars remain in Day Schools, necessarily restrict the range of instruction. This, however, is a benefit rather than an evil; since it precludes the better-instructed teachers from preferring the *showy* to the drudgery involved in teaching the mere rudiments.

The scholars possess a fair amount of Bible knowledge. By this I do not mean that they can repeat, as in a higher class of schools, genealogical or historical tables; but they are well acquainted with the leading incidents of the Bible, more especially those connected with the ministry of Jesus.

As practical has been interwoven with doctrinal religion, they receive a moral education which cannot be overvalued. Hence, I think, on the whole, that our scholars are more affectionate and respectful to their superiors, and less inclined than formerly to annoy each other.

I have recently heard our elder day scholars read. By my journal it appears that 1,313 were presented by the day teachers as able to read. Of these, 669 read well, 303 read moderately, and 341 badly. It thus appears that about one in eight of our day scholars can read moderately well.

Their penmanship has improved. The writing is bolder than formerly; as I have invariably discountenanced the use of a small, unreadable hand. The copy-books, too, of the majority are cleaner than they used to be.

As respects Arithmetic, it may be observed that most are more expert in mental—or practical—than in slate—or theoretical—arithmetic.

NIGHT SCHOOLS.

The nominal number of Night Schools is 66. The actual number is,—Mixed, 20; Boys', 33; Girls', 32: total, 85.

The aggregate attendance is 4,000.

The average age of our Night scholars is only about 10½. This, at the first glance, appears too young; but as so many of our scholars go out to work as early as eight years, a higher average can scarcely be expected, unless a good staff of voluntary teachers could be obtained, At Clarence Street, there is such a

staff of volunteers, and as a result, 100 "roughs," attend during the winter months, of the average age of 14.

In order to meet the habits of the "roughs"—the class for whom Night Schools were primarily devised—I have steadily advocated a late hour of meeting. And though in some cases without success, yet I do not despair of ultimately reporting that no Night School meets before seven. Already 45, or two-thirds, do not meet before that time.

Considering the paucity of voluntary teachers, the discipline of the majority of Night Schools is good. As the average attendance at the Night Schools is 47, this result is encouraging. Nor is there any exception in the Mixed Night Schools. The mere association of the sexes imparts a family aspect to the school, and I have not heard of any rudeness on the part of either boys or girls.

INDUSTRIAL CLASSES.

In the West and South there are 10 *Boys'* Industrial Classes, with 191 members.

As there are 4 Shoe-black Societies in my district, with 147 members, they in many respects act as industrial training. From the certainty that well conducted boys will obtain employment, these Societies exercise a salutary influence on the scholars generally.

Needlework and Knitting are taught in 43 schools to 1,394 *Girls*. Many girls, unhappily, show a preference for crochet and other useless fancy work, which can only minister to vanity. But, in co-operation with the teachers, I have steadily resisted the introduction of any save plain needlework or knitting.

In most schools sweeping devolves on the paid monitors. In a few the weekly scrubbing is also managed by them. As this is a heavy expense to some schools, I think that the cleansing of the school-room might be committed to the elder girls, and thus initiate them into one of the duties of domestic life.

REFUGES.

There are 8 Refuges in the West and South. The number of inmates is as follows:—Boys, 183; girls, 161: total, 344.

SANITARY.

The sanitary state of the school-rooms is better than formerly. As one result, the children are less subject to inflammation of the eyes, caused by the ammonia generated in school-rooms. Still the ventilation of many school-rooms is not what it ought or might be.

The schools have occasionally had the attendance diminished through illness, but not so much as formerly. In Windmill Street, however, 10 died last December from scarlet fever; and in November 16 died of the same disease in Cottage Place. I think it right to add that, whenever I hear of any child suffering from fever, I advise the paid teacher not to admit any child who lives in the same house until the cure has been effected. This, indeed, is the only way of preventing fever running through our schools like wild-fire.

BANKS AND CLOTHING CLUBS.

Though primarily designed for our scholars, yet it was found that, in the majority of cases, their parents or friends were the real depositors. The principle has therefore been so broadened out as to include adults, who now form the bulk of the depositors. Out of 47 Penny Banks in my district, 27 also receive deposits from parents and their friends. They have undoubtedly exerted a salutary influence on the low districts where Ragged Schools are planted. Indeed, I regard these banks as one means of ultimately rendering Ragged Schools unnecessary, for did the parents exercise any forethought, or had any feelings of true independence, a moiety could readily send their children to pay schools.

In the West and South there are 47 Penny Banks and 25 Clothing Clubs.

PARENTS' MEETINGS.

In my district there are 39 Mothers' Meetings, with 1,046 members.

They are mostly in an encouraging state, those I have seen consisting of the right class, and evincing much interest in the gathering.

There has also been some spiritual benefit derived from the addresses, but more especially from the private conversation and visits of the conductors. Many now attend places of worship who were once habitual absentees. But, better far than this, 52 are known to have been admitted into church fellowship during the past year or two.

An effort has been made by six institutions to enlist the co-operation of the fathers. About 140 belong to these meetings. But most efforts have failed in producing any permanent result, the badly conducted fathers, or the majority, preferring the public-house, and the really industrious being too tired when work is over to leave their houses.

In 41 schools divine worship is regularly conducted, the attendance being about 1,100.

Two plans of usefulness I should like to see more generally adopted, as thereby the machinery of Ragged Schools would be perfected, namely,

I. LIBRARIES.

These ought to be attached to every Ragged School. Not only would a taste for reading be cultivated, but education would be carried on out of school time. It is probable, too, that our elder scholars would be retained longer than at present. To the reflex influence that such home reading would have on the parents I need not advert.

These views I have endeavoured to enforce, both in private and in your magazine. As a result, a few schools established Libraries last year, and both money and books have been sent to the office.

II. SENIOR BIBLE CLASSES.

At present many of our elder scholars are lost sight of at the most critical period of life. This does not always arise from their ungovernableness, but

from the fact that, in the bulk of our schools, there is no link to bind them to their school when they are too old to mix with the younger scholars. Such a link would be found in the formation of two Senior Bible Classes, for males and females above fourteen.

As a moiety of the schools in my district have separate rooms, the privacy essential to such classes could be readily obtained. In the remaining schools this end might be answered by the erection of dwarf screens with curtains.

In the 12 Sunday Schools where such classes are now conducted much good has been derived.

CONCLUSION.

On comparing the statistics of last year with those reported in 1859, it is gratifying to find an increase in every department, Thus we find that in the past two years there has been an increase of 2,279 Sunday scholars, 1,638 Day scholars, and 400 Night scholars. During the same period, too, the Penny Banks and Clubs have increased from 51 to 72, and the Parents' Meetings from 36 to 45. Nor has the voluntary agency diminished; seeing that whilst in 1859 there were 1,106, there are now 1,401 voluntary teachers.

My earnest prayer is that the dew of the Spirit may abide on every Ragged School. For glad though I am to know that 863 boys and girls belonging to my divisions obtained work last year, I feel that temporal good is a very minor part of our labours. It is only as souls are brought to a saving knowlege of Christ that we have any right to consider our work as successful. It is something to know that nearly 70 former scholars are now labouring as voluntary teachers; but these can only be regarded as the first fruits of a more precious harvest. This result is distinctly promised more to faith and prayer than to mere labour. Hence my prayer is, that you, as directors of this great missionary movement, and those upon whom you have devolved the executive, may be so baptized by the Holy Ghost that the combined labour may receive the Divine benediction.

THE SHOE-BLACKS' WINTER TREAT.

THE annual gathering of the various Ragged School Shoe-black Societies for their Winter Treat, took place on Friday evening, 14th February, at the Hanover Square Rooms. The boys were assembled to the number of 362 in the lower room, and did full justice to a plentiful repast of tea and cake. They were then marched into the large room, where the varied colours of their distinctive uniforms and banners, and the happy appearance of the boys, presented a most pleasing spectacle. They were ranged on the raised seats along the sides of the room, the body of the room being filled with the friends and supporters of the movement, a large proportion of the audience being ladies. The Earl of Shaftesbury presided. The platform was occupied by Mr. W. H. Miller, of the Lambeth Ragged Schools, who had kindly consented to give the Entertainment of the evening, in which he was assisted by a choir of Ragged School teachers, and a lady who played a grand pianoforte, lent for the occasion by Messrs. Broadwood. Shortly after the time fixed for the commencement of the proceedings,

The Earl of Shaftesbury, whose appearance was the signal for an enthusiastic outburst of applause, said,—"Ladies, Gentlemen, and Shoe-blacks of all colours and degrees,—My excellent friend Mr. Ware told me before I came to this meeting to-night, that there were to be no speeches, and he said that it was

wished to make a considerable improvement in the order of things on these occasions. He said he thought that the absence of speeches would contribute very much to the comfort of the evening, and in this I entirely agree with him. On such an occasion as this, it is not necessary that anybody should make a speech; for the history of the brigades—all that they have done, and all that, by God's blessing, they are capable of doing—is fully known to you. You see before you more than 300 fine lads, who by the blessing of God on the efforts of those who have had the Institutions in charge, have been rescued from vice and misery, and who, instead of being what they are now, might have been amongst the thieves of our streets. This, my friends, is their winter treat; but in order that it should be truly a treat, it must be a treat on all sides, and nothing can be a greater treat to myself, than to sit down and hold my tongue.

The entertainment of the evening was then proceeded with. Mr. Miller described his subject as "A Journey from the North Pole towards the Equator." The journey was performed by means of a succession of paintings, each of which suggested a topic for amusing anecdotes, not unmixed with instructive and patriotic touches, all told in language to come home especially to boys. The Shoe-blacks very clearly demonstrated their appreciation of Mr. Miller's anecdotes and illustrations, and the friends assembled to share in their enjoyment seemed hardly less entertained. Musical pieces were sung by the choir at intervals, and during the closing scene—a ship of war at Portsmouth—the boys united very heartily in the chorus of "Rule Britannia."

At the conclusion of the entertainment, J. Payne, Esq., said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, and Shoe-blacks of every description, my Lord Shaftesbury has said that there was to be no speaking to night, but I am set up here to say a few words in conclusion; it is to express our sense of gratitude to those who have contributed to our entertainment to-night. I have been told that my attitude is to be one of gratitude, and my gratitude is to have great latitude; but I have the pleasure to inform you that I am to have very little longitude — it will be over in a few minutes.

We have to express our gratitude to Mr. Miller for his interesting entertainment; to Lord Shaftesbury for coming to this place to smile on the Shoe-black boys; to the singers who have sung so well; to the gentleman who so kindly lent us the piano, and to the lady who played. I remember a man who said I have no voice, my voice is in my sword; I shall say I have no voice, my voice is in my tail—that is, in my tail-piece, which I shall now read:—

VALENTINE'S DAY WITH THE SHOE-BLACKS; OR, A SONG OF MANY COLOURS.

When pleas'd I look round, though in Hanover-square,
And see the young lads in variety there;
I feel like a wight his respects who would pay,
To the "People of Colour" on Valentine's day.

While hues of the rainbow enliven the room,
I wish, as I gaze on each Shoe-black's costume,
That plenty of yellow boys all could display,
Their pockets to fill on this Valentine's Day.

And cheers have been hearty, and eyes are all bright,
And crowds have confess'd it a very fine sight;
For save where the garments dark colours display,
We've had no black looks on this Valentine's Day.

Good tea is a blessing, strong drink the reverse,
And drunkenness now is the working man's curse;
And much we delight to see, none here display
A nose that is red on this Valentine's Day.

There's nothing like water, the old poet sings,
Hurrah for the fountains, the rivers, the springs;

If Shoe-blacks abstain, I will venture to say,
They will not be done brown any Valentine's Day.

Our Miller is flowery, our Miller is wise,
He clears out so nicely the dust from our eyes;
That with him we gladly have gone a long way,
Even to the North Pole on this Valentine's Day.

The choir have performed in an excellent manner,
And Broadwoods have lent us a splendid piano;
So part for the singing, and part for the say,
We offer our thanks on this Valentine's Day.

God prosper the Earl who presides o'er the scene,
May his prospects be flourishing, fertile, and green;
'Tis joy to behold him such vigour display,
As he sits in the chair on this Valentine's Day.

And now to conclude, lest you think me too long,
And feel that I'm "coming it raythor too strong!"
To all who are present I gratefully say,
"Many happy returns" of this Valentine's Day.

The proceedings closed with singing the National Anthem. Several of the Societies had Drum and Fife Bands, whose performances enlivened their march homeward.

The following is a statement of the condition of the different Societies represented on this occasion:—

Name of Society.	Boys.	Earnings last Year.
Central (Red)	65	£1,630
East London (Blue)	100	1,054
South London (Yellow)	42	550
North-West London	60	345
West London	19	270
Islington	30	317
Notting Hill	26	277
Union Jack	20	222
Total	362	£4,665

Some of the Societies have refuges for their destitute boys. In the East London Society's Refuge there are 47 boys, in the South London 12, in the North-West London 10, in the Islington 18, and in the Union Jack Refuge, 7. Total 94.

Correspondence.

POLICE AT RAGGED SCHOOLS.

To the Editor of the Ragged School Union Magazine.

Dear Sir,—Since you kindly inserted my letter in your Magazine, in reference to the removal of the police from our schools, I have addressed Sir R. Mayne upon the subject, and enclose you his reply. You will perceive he asserts that the statement in my letter of last month is not correct. I do not know in what it is incorrect; but I do know that I have no police in attendance, and the annoyance in consequence increases each Sunday;

windows are broken; a boy's head, one night, cut open; and the noise and confusion on the increase. It would seem, however, by the latter clause of Sir Richard's letter that there is some hope. If I read it aright, each Superintendent must make an appeal to the Commissioner or Superintendent of the district. Will you kindly give your opinion, that we may be all guided by it?

Yours very truly,

W. H. MILLER.

"Metropolitan Police Office, Whitehall Place, February 13th, 1862.

"SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, and to acquaint you in reply, that the statement of the police orders in the printed letter to which you refer is not correct.

"The Superintendent of each division may, when he considers it necessary, shorten the beat of a constable in the neighbourhood of a Ragged School during school hours. Special cases may make an arrangement proper for the temporary attendance of a constable at a Ragged School. This is to be done by the directions of the Commissioner, on a report by the Superintendent of the circumstances of the case.

"I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

"Mr. W. H. Miller." "RICHARD MAYNE.

SUNDAY PENNY BANKS.

To the Editor of the Ragged School Union Magazine.

1, Exeter Hall, February 15, 1862.

SIR,—It is my duty to inform you that the correspondence that has appeared in the Ragged School Union Magazine on the subject of Penny Banks being conducted in a Ragged School on the Lord's day was brought under the notice of the Committee of the Ragged School Union at their meeting held last evening by one of its members, and after due consideration a resolution was adopted, of which the following is a copy:—

> "That the attention of this Committee having been directed to the fact of a Penny Bank being conducted in a Ragged School on the evening of the Lord's day, they have to express their strong disapproval of the practice as being, in their judgment, contrary to the sacred duties of that holy day."

The Committee hope the publicity you have given to the correspondence on this subject may cause the friends to reconsider this subject, and lead them to see that such a practice is a movement in the wrong direction, and consequently one in which they ought not to persevere.

Any practice in our schools that tends unnecessarily to familiarise the scholars to secular employments on the Sabbath, and thereby to lessen the sanctity of the Lord's day in their eyes, is an evil of no light consequence, and therefore should be scrupulously avoided. "Abstain from all *appearance* of evil," is the teaching of Holy Writ, but some of our friends say there is no evil in this practice. To this we demur, and, in reply, say there is the *appearance* of evil; and the Apostle's instruction is as binding now, especially where the moral and religious training of youth is concerned, as it was when Paul addressed it to the church at Thessalonica. Teachers are the children's examplars as well as instructors. And as the impressions made by example are more lasting than those by precept, it follows that the copy we set our children should be as faultless as the rules we give them are perfect.

Yours very truly,

JOSEPH G. GENT, *Secretary.*

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President.—THE RIGHT HON. LORD EBURY.

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Contributions will be thankfully received by the Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, and the Members of the Committee; by Messrs. Nisbet, Berners Street; Hatchard, Piccadilly; Seeley, Fleet Street; the Bankers, Messrs. Smith, Payne, & Co., 1, Lombard Street; and by the Secretary, Mr. William F. Blake, at the Office of the Society, 4, Trafalgar Square, Charing Cross.

The Annual Report for the past year will be forwarded, post free, on a line being addressed to the Secretary.

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EDWIN PAYNE, M.D., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.,
Assistant Physician to the Royal General Dispensary, &c. &c.
September 27th, 1861.

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